

# 8

## Implementation and Process





## 8. IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESS

### I. Implementation

#### A. Cambridge Pedestrian Committee



Pedestrian Committee members help evaluate street conditions.

The Cambridge Pedestrian Committee is appointed by the city manager. It consists of people who live or work in Cambridge and staff from related departments: community development; traffic, parking, and transportation; public works; and the police.

The committee was established to work to improve conditions for pedestrians in Cambridge, to recommend policies affecting pedestrians, to promote walking as a means of transportation, and to make walking safer for everyone. The committee serves in an advisory capacity, providing vision, feedback, ideas, and assistance to City staff and office holders.

People who live or work in Cambridge who are not on the committee are encouraged to participate in various projects related to carrying out the pedestrian plan.

#### B. Coordination among City Departments and with Other Agencies

Many pedestrian-related issues and projects have overlapping jurisdictions within City departments. To coordinate planning and carrying out transportation projects, Cambridge officials who deal with transportation issues meet monthly. Expanded computer capabilities, especially the Geographic Information System (GIS), are expected to bolster the City's ability to analyze infrastructure needs and coordinate repairs and retrofits.

Coordination and advocacy with other agencies is important as well: with the MBTA to improve services within Cambridge and between Cambridge and other communities; with the MHD concerning highway and bridge issues; with the MDC concerning MDC roads and parks; and with regional planning and transportation agencies.

City officials work with members of the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee and with other community groups to help coordinate communication and advocacy.

#### C. Public Education

##### Promoting Walking

It is in the interests of the people who live and work in Cambridge that more people walk. There are many things the City can do to promote walking.

Possible projects include:

- Continue to distribute *How to Get Around in Cambridge* (city map and travel guide).
- Publish and distribute a Cambridge walking guide, covering a variety of pedestrian issues. Include suggested walking routes, walking safety tips, hot line numbers, and pedestrian rights and responsibilities.
- Find and publicize prominent Cambridge walkers.
- Promote neighborhood walks, neighborhood cleanups, historical walks, nature walks, arts walks.
- Create a special marked pedestrian route for tourists.



Cambridge map.

- Promote walk-for-health projects by organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA or by employers. Encourage employers to promote and make it easy for employees to walk to work.
- Make walking promotion a more prominent part of the City's TDM program for City staff.
- Promote the idea that walking is pleasant in almost all weather if you are dressed for it.
- Organize a walk to work week.
- Continue to work with local schools and D.P.W. to promote walking to school.

**Action:**

- Work with the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee to undertake public education to promote walking.

**Safety Education**

Safety education for adults and children is needed. Many pedestrians do not know basic safety rules. Many do not understand what *walk* and blinking or steady *don't walk* signals mean.<sup>26</sup> Many motorists do not know that the law requires that they yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks. Many parents do not know how to effectively teach their children street and sidewalk safety. Substantial numbers of people who know the laws fail to follow them consistently.

**Actions:**

- Spread information about the rules of the road for drivers and safety tips for pedestrians through:
  - Schools
  - School crossing guards
  - Parent education programs
  - Police
  - Elder services
  - Driver education classes
  - Taxi companies
  - Public service announcements
- Encourage people to report unsafe conditions for walkers. The response to callers should include information about whether or not the problem can be fixed immediately.
- Work to make bicycle and pedestrian collision statistic collection part of the state public health system.
- Work with the Registry of Motor Vehicles to ensure that motor vehicle laws regarding bicyclists and pedestrians are emphasized in driver education materials and driver tests.

**D. Enforcement of Traffic Laws**

When motorists break the traffic laws they endanger pedestrians and add to an atmosphere that inhibits people from walking and allowing their children the freedom to explore their neighborhoods. Among the most dangerous motorist

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26 *Handbook*, p. 158.



Sign in business district.

infractions are failing to yield for pedestrians in crosswalks, speeding, going through red lights, speeding up rather than slowing down at intersections, failing to stop at stop signs, and parking too close to corners.

Errant bicyclists, especially unlighted bicyclists and those who ride in the wrong direction or go through red lights or stop signs, also present a danger to pedestrians as well as to themselves. The City is engaged in a public education campaign to teach bicyclists how to ride legally and safely.

Another difficult issue for pedestrians is bicycles on sidewalks. The sidewalk is an appropriate place for children to ride; adults are generally safer on the street. Bicycle riding is banned on sidewalks in the Harvard Square and Central Square business districts, in Inman Square (Cambridge St. from Camelia Ave. to Prospect St. and Hampshire St. from Prospect to the Somerville line), Mass. Ave. from Wendell/Shepard to Russell/Cogswell and Somerville Ave. to the Somerville line, and Huron Village (Huron Ave. from Fayerweather to Lakeview). If they ride on sidewalks elsewhere, cyclists must proceed at no faster than a normal walking speed, always yield to pedestrians, and give an audible warning when passing (see Appendix VI).

Long waits at some Cambridge intersections may encourage pedestrians to jaywalk. The very short times for *walk* signals in Boston (at most intersections, 7 seconds or less out of an 85 to 90 second signal cycle), along with Boston's heavy reliance on pedestrian push-button signals, may foster a tendency to disregard the signals there. This may also affect people's behavior in Cambridge.

#### **Actions:**

- Increase enforcement of traffic laws to discourage speeding, running red lights and stop signs, and parking too close to an intersection.
- Investigate devices that could assist in law enforcement, e.g., the use of cameras at intersections to film cars disobeying traffic signals. Cameras have been shown to have a dramatic effect on motorist behavior. Work to make their use legal in Massachusetts.
- Continue the City's bicycle facilities program to make the streets safer for bicyclists by incorporating bicycle lanes and other improvements into street reconstruction projects.
- Work to change traffic laws that now require motorists and cyclists to yield to pedestrians to instead require that motorists and vehicles stop for pedestrians.
- Conduct a campaign to inform pedestrians that obeying the law is important for their own safety.

### **E. Building Effective Constituencies**

Many people are interested in working on pedestrian issues. People who walk are often the most valuable diagnosticians of problems and evaluators of solutions.

#### **Actions:**

- Reach out to the groups that are potential allies for creating a more walkable city: people who enjoy walking, people with mobility impediments, elderly people, advocates for children, crime watch groups, health organizations, bicycle advocates, the universities, neighborhood groups, and clean air groups, among others. With the help of the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee, these groups will be contacted to discuss what they can do, especially in areas that require mobilizing public opinion, such as creating an expectation that residents will comply with sidewalk maintenance ordinances.

- Reach out to potential allies, e.g., business associations and the tourism industry, to discuss the economic benefits of making Cambridge more walkable.
- Work with neighboring communities to help create effective advocacy on a regional and state level.

## II. Process

### A. Oversight

The pedestrian plan is a working document. It is in loose-leaf form so it can be updated easily. Experience gained from its implementation will be used to improve the plan. To do so requires:

1. Considering, as specifically as possible, what results are expected from an action.
2. Determining how results will be evaluated.
3. Where possible, putting into place mechanisms to monitor results.
4. Determining whether an action has been implemented.
5. Measuring the results of the implementation.
6. Recognizing that many important results may not be directly measurable.
7. Considering, as experience is gained, whether the actions themselves need to be changed—made more specific, modified, maybe scrapped altogether—and what new actions need to be undertaken.

#### **Actions:**

- Work with the police to develop optimally useful record keeping on injuries to pedestrians and street crimes against pedestrians.
- Develop a monitoring system for pedestrian improvements, with measurement tools and provision for mid-course correction.



### B. Reporting of Pedestrian Problem Spots

The City encourages people to report places and situations that are difficult for pedestrians. Specific issues should be directed to the following telephone numbers:

Traffic signal problems	(617) 349-4700
Sidewalks in need of repair	(617) 349-4800
Vegetation obstructing sidewalks	(617) 349-6100
Sidewalk snow clearance hotline	(617) 349-4903

In addition, people are encouraged to call (617) 349-4604 with questions, general issues, and other concerns.

The Cambridge Pedestrian Committee, working with City staff, compiles a list of pedestrian problem spots, intersections or other areas that are difficult for pedestrians and need more than routine maintenance to fix. Everyone who walks in Cambridge is encouraged to contribute to the list.

City staff set priorities for projects, based on factors such as the urgency of the need, whether or not the area is scheduled for renovation as part of another project, and the relative ease and cost of fixing the problem.

### C. Conclusion

Implementation is the point of the plan. Policies, enforcement, and roadwork projects are primarily the responsibility of City staff. Many of the less tangible things that help make a city a pleasure to walk in are in the hands of all of us who travel through Cambridge. These include courteous behavior on the part of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, attention to keeping sidewalks clean and clear of impediments, and the other elements that make walking fun: front-yard gardens, children playing, attractive storefronts, and the opportunity to be part of the community by sharing the sidewalk with others who live, or work, or visit in Cambridge.



